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Francis Hooke, and William Brocas. Mem. That John Hobson hath formerly been in Virginia and is now ready to return thither, is also fit to serve as a Councillor.

(*Colonial Papers*, Vol. 9, No. 59.)

SAINSBURY'S ABSTRACTS AND THE COLONIAL HISTORY OF VIRGINIA.

In Vol. VII (pp. 187-189, 268-275) of this *Magazine*, I made some remarks on "Sainsbury's Abstracts" as published in Vol. VI, and in Vol. VII, Nos. 1 and 2. I now wish to make some more remarks on the same subject.

The second paper under "*Virginia in 1628*" (Vol. VII, p. 259), dated March 4, 1628 (that is, March 14, 1629, present style), should be transferred to same vol., p. 369, and inserted as the first paper under "*Virginia in 1629*." The letter complete (an important one) contains about 700, the abstract only about 100 words.

The old style date used by the English government during this period was not and is not the correct date. As illustrating how hard it is for men to acknowledge an historic error or wrong it may be noted that the old style was retained by Englishmen for 170 years after the error in time had really been corrected. John Bull was finally obliged to adopt the present style in 1752, because the old style was not correct; but the error in the dates of the records prior to 1752 has not yet been completely corrected. My experience has convinced me that there will always be a confusion of dates in our history from 1606 to 1752, unless we adopt the new style date for that period; because the old style was and is incorrect, while the new style was and is correct—and history should give the correct dates.

In Vol. VIII.—Harvey's letter to Dorchester of April 1st, 1631 (pp. 30-32), should precede the commission of May 24 (O. S.), 1631, p. 29. I doubt if the documents—"King to governor of Virginia" (pp. 35-36, and "*Petition of George Sandys*" p. 43,

are correctly dated, but it is not necessary to go into these questions now. "*Considerations against a new Virginia Company*" (pp. 40-43) belongs under April, 1632; it should follow the "*order*" of March 1st, 1632 (pp. 45-46), and both of these papers should be transferred to "*Virginia in 1632*" (see same vol., pp. 147, etc.). The letter from Harvey of Feb'y 20, 1632 (*i. e.*, March 2, 1633, N. S.), pp. 147-148, should be transferred to p. 151. ("*Virginia in 1633*"), preceding the orders of Privy Council of July 1st, 1633. The "*King to Sir Henry Spiller*" (p. 300), is correct—*Spillman* was a different man; but the letter being of March, 1633, should be transferred to "*Virginia in 1636*" (Vol. IX, p. 36), following "*Harvey to Nicholas*."

In order to be able to place a correct estimation on the historical value of these abstracts it is necessary to understand the character of the colonial movement to which they relate and to consider the influence of English politics on these evidences. The Crown of Great Britain, under certain inducements, granted definite and broad political, territorial, and commercial rights, in perpetuity to the Virginia corporation and body politic; but after the members of that body, at the expense of their own blood and treasure, had secured a foothold in their territory and begun to govern themselves therein, the crown, for the purpose of putting a stop to the popular course of government which they were instituting, determined to annul their charters and to reduce the "*body politic*" of Virginia to the status of a commercial company—"a company for trade, but not for government of the country." The crown, also, determined to confiscate the evidences of the corporation, in order to obliterate the facts, and make "*the history*" conform with the purposes of the crown. And these royal policies continued to have an influence over the colonial movement in Virginia.

It will be seen that over seven-eighths of the abstracts given in this *Magazine* (Vols. VI to IX) are of a political character. They show that disputes were going on between the crown officials and the people of Virginia, yet practically all of this evidence must be classed as evidence under the influence of, or directly for, the crown against the cause of the people. The original documents were written either by or to—Kings or royal officials. Not one of a political character was written by one of

the people to one of the people. None can be classed as having been entirely free from the influence of the crown, and as being strictly evidence for the people by the people. It may be noted that these abstracts produce the impression that the controversy which was going on between the crown officials and people of Virginia was over the restoration of a company in London, etc. This is a very important phase of this case and it will be well to consider it more fully, because it has always been misrepresented in our histories and because it furnishes the key to a proper understanding of much of the colonial history of Virginia.

The charters of 1609 and 1612 were granted to the corporation and body politic of South Virginia having political and territorial as well as commercial rights, they were not granted to a commercial company. If "The Virginia Company of London" had been only a company for trade and not for government James I., would not have felt the need of having the charters annulled by a *Quo Warranto* suit in the King's Bench. He felt obliged to enter this suit against these charters because they conveyed, under the broad seal of England, political and property rights in America to a body politic, largely, independent of the crown of England. This political body was composed of adventurers in England and planters in Virginia. The patriot adventurers and planters stood up together in advocacy of their charter rights before the crown for a time; but in the course of time, many adventurers came over to Virginia and became planters, or transferred their interests to heirs or assigns who became planters—thus the adventurer element in the corporation was always on the decrease while the planter element was constantly increasing, and as early as 1633 we find the planters in Virginia as a distinct body, petitioning the crown that "they may be incorporated and made a Bodie Politick againe & may enjoy their estates & Trade with ye same freedom & priviledges that they did before ye recalling of their Pattents." To offset the petitions of the popular party the royalists in Virginia petitioned against "a new Virginia Company," etc.; but this was merely a subterfuge of crown politics. The contention of the people of Virginia with the crown was not over the restoration of a company in London, but over the political, territorial and commercial rights which had been granted by the crown to the planters (the body politic)

of Virginia in perpetuity under their charters of 1609 and 1612. And as an evidence of this fact, in answer to their petitions the planters were finally incorporated again by the renewal of their charters under the Long Parliament, and from 1652 to 1660 the colony was really under the government of the planters (the body politic) of Virginia, and not of a company in London.

In brief the object of the crown was to annul the popular charter rights which it had granted in perpetuity; to destroy the popular principles of government on which the colony of Virginia had been founded; and to obliterate the history thereof. The base of the controversy between the crown officials and the people ("the body politic") of Virginia was these charter rights, these political principles, and it continued to prevail, with varying earnestness, until it culminated in our revolution.

We have no guide for the present or the future save the past. It is the office of history to furnish mankind with this guidance. When history conveys the correct idea of past events, of those engaged therein, and of the motives which inspired them, its real practical value cannot be overestimated. When it does not, although it may be as interesting as a romance, it has no practical value as history. Owing to the absolute control of the crown over history and to the fact that our people have not paid proper attention to the character of evidences and to the influence of politics on them, the histories of the colony and people of Virginia from 1606 to 1760 have been largely based on evidences which came directly under the influence of the crown, consequently they have not conveyed the correct idea of the vast importance to mankind of the colonial movement in Virginia, of those engaged therein, and of the motives which inspired them. They may be very interesting, but they have no practical value as history.

The crown of Great Britain wished to annul the charter-rights of the body politic of Virginia; *but it failed*—our people finally secured those rights. The crown wished to suppress the popular principles of government instituted by "the corporation and body politic" of Virginia; *but it failed*—our people adopted those principles and finally declared their independence of the crown. The crown wished to obliterate the real history of this popular colonial movement, and in this its efforts have not yet

resulted in actual failure; although the movement really succeeded over 120 years ago the influence of the crown is still felt in our histories thereof. This phase of the old controversy between the crown of England and "body politic" of Virginia is still going on; but the effort of the crown to obliterate this history must finally fail, for the real history of this movement can only be written, as it was enacted, independent of the influences of the crown. The popular course of government would not have been instituted in Virginia, it would not have continued to grow nor would it ever have matured there, if the English Court party which licensed the history and controlled the evidences could have prevented it; and those who instituted, nurtured and matured that form of government cannot receive the honors due them if our histories are based on the evidences of the crown. The loyal view-point of our colonial history was revolutionized over 120 years ago; our historians must recognize that fact and secure us from the imputation of insensibility by restoring the true history which the crown wished to obliterate.

ALEXANDER BROWN.

**Notes from the Council and General Court Records,
1641-1682.**

BY THE LATE CONWAY ROBINSON, ESQ.

(CONTINUED.)

Master having declared before his death that negro should be free, freedom declared.

Nov. 27. P. 80. Sentence for violent assault upon an Indian. If Indians continue incursions, war to be vigorously prosecuted.

Bonds, &c., 1677 to 1682. Orders.

1678, Dec. 31. Justices of Surry and York, who had been suspended, restored to office. P. 80. Charles City. P. 84.

Herbert Jeffreys, Lt. Gov., and Thomas Needles, Commissary, being both dead, examination as to Am't of King's money on hand. P. 81.

P. 84. Fine for entertaining Quakers.